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INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001624

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/SE, EUR/RPM, EUR/ERA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/10/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [TU](#) [GG](#)
SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA INTERESTED IN EU OBSERVER MISSION IN
GEORGIA

REF: STATE 96122

Classified By: DCM Doug Silliman for Reason 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) During a meeting to deliver reftel demarche (reported septel), MFA NATO Security Affairs Section Head M. Turker Ari took the opportunity to note Turkey's interest in the proposed EU observer mission in Georgia. Ari inquired whether the US has received any information from the EU about the mission. He noted that Turkey has not received any information about the proposal except through press reporting, and has not been invited to participate in the mission. While acknowledging the EU's right to discuss the mission at 27, Ari expressed his hope that Turkey would be consulted earlier on about the mission, and not simply be asked to contribute observers once mission planning has already been finalized. He underscored Turkey's good relationship with Georgia and its intense interest in developments there, and predicted that Turkey would respond positively if invited to contribute toward the mission.

Comment and action request

¶2. (C): Turkey has consistently complained (including during U/S Burns' September 5 consultations in Ankara with MFA U/S Apakan - reported septel) about the EU's unwillingness to consult with Turkey on ESDP missions before final decisions have been taken.

¶3. (C) If the French or EU international staff were to approach Ankara at a senior level to brief Turkey on the Sarkozy-Medvedev meeting and provide an outline of the proposed EU observer mission to Georgia before the EU reaches a final decision on the mission, this would serve as tangible evidence of the EU being more sensitive to Turkish concerns. Such a move would help improve Franco-Turkish relations and might even soften Turkish opposition to NATO-EU cooperation, especially on-the-ground collaboration in Kosovo. The EU mission would also benefit as we expect Turkey will be eager to make a significant contribution to the mission. Conversely, if the EU makes its final decisions on a mission in Georgia without consulting Turkey, Ankara would view this as further evidence of EU disregard for Turkey's legitimate interests, making Turkish flexibility on KFOR-EULEX on-the-ground cooperation even more unlikely.

¶4. (C) We request Department consider reaching out to appropriately senior GOF and/or EU officials to suggest France discuss this mission with Turkey before any final EU decision is taken.

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<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turkey>

WILSON